

Marketing As An Element Of Strategic Communication

By Daniel R. Matchette, Lieutenant Colonel, USA

Editorial Abstract: LTC Matchette examines how selling a variety of commercial messages can apply to US Government strategic communication campaigns. He provides a detailed model analysis of Middle Eastern audiences, potential US marketing strategies, product delivery ideas, and how the US Government might compete in the world ideas market.

In 2005, US companies spent roughly \$1 trillion on marketing and reaped \$12 trillion in revenue. They knew a credible and repeated message earns customers. Positive customer experience with product or service, along with truth in the message brings customers back. Relationships are built; loyalties are developed. They will want your product, not your competitors.

The United States Government markets Freedom, Democracy, Security, and Stability. We desire other countries of the world to “buy these products” for if they do—we believe—we will reap the benefits of a safer world, greater political freedoms and economic growth for all peoples, and a strengthened ability to defeat global terrorism. However, the United States is losing credibility world wide to the point that we have significant problems influencing actions of other peoples and governments. The American public doubts the message of the US Government. Poor coordination between US agencies exacerbates the problems. Customers do not want our product.

The United States Government and Department of Defense could reap the same benefits by applying industry accepted practices to our diplomatic, military diplomacy, and strategic communication activities. A corporate marketing approach to our military strategic communications can be effective and bring desired results.

“...(Terrorists) get up in the morning, have committee meetings and think about how they’re going to manipulate the world’s press to their advantage. They have repeatedly proven to be highly successful at manipulating the world’s media here in this country as well as elsewhere...”

Marketing campaigns are effective in business. We could use the same

approach to build relationships and loyalties between the United States Government, the American people, and the peoples of the world. If the Department of Defense and the United States Government were to adopt a marketing based strategy for strategic communication and public diplomacy, we would see a great payoff in terms of promoting the country’s foreign policy objectives—mostly clearly laid out in the National Security Strategy.

A good marketing strategy is more than just having a catchy message, sound bites, and some themes. An effective marketing strategy



is organized around the marketing campaign. Like all campaigns, marketing campaigns are planned in detail. They are based on a solid intelligence estimate, seamlessly integrated with the operational plans, and tightly coordinated during execution. Most importantly, campaigns require unity of operations and a clear understanding of the “commanders’ intent.” If not, the attempt will fail.

The question remains whether the United States Government “sells” products we would want to market? I believe we do. Selling is the exchange of goods or services in exchange for some type of remuneration. This may be monetary or take the form of some other good or service. What product does the government sell, and what do we expect

in return for that product? I believe we sell Freedom, Democracy, Security, and Stability. These basic tenets are laid out by the President of the United States, and reiterated by the Secretaries of State and Defense. The US desires other countries throughout the world to adopt democracy, to enjoy freedom, and to know security and stability in their areas of the world. If we can successfully sell these products to other non-democratic nations, the remuneration—the payment—will be greater security for the United States, a safer world with greater political freedoms and economic growth for all peoples, increased human dignity worldwide, and a strengthened ability to defeat global terrorism.

Is this “selling” aspect of strategic communications a Department of Defense (DOD) mission? The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff states it succinctly: “The US military, in coordination with interagency and Coalition partners, will support a US Government strategic communication strategy for the Global War on Terrorism.” This goal is echoed in the *National Defense Strategy* and the Department of Defense *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Marketing techniques adapted from the commercial sector would provide unique tools and methodologies to satisfy this requirement and address some of the greater strategic problems the US faces.

The goal of the *National Security Strategy* is to influence actions of target groups and countries around the world in order to increase our own security. In the Department of Defense we can use marketing as a means to this end. Strategic Communication is not sufficient; it is just the message. Marketing makes the message “actionable” and brings results.

The Problems We Face

The United States has lost worldwide credibility to the point where we have significant problems influencing actions of other peoples and governments. Consider these highlights from a few news stories and other public information sources:

- “Opinion surveys conducted by Zogby International, the Pew Research Center, Gallup (CNN/USA Today), and the Department of State (INR) reveal widespread animosity toward the United States and its policies... Data from Zogby International in July 2004, for example, show that the US is viewed unfavorably by overwhelming majorities in Egypt (98 percent), Saudi Arabia (94 percent), Morocco (88 percent), and Jordan (78 percent).”

- “Negative attitudes and the conditions that create them are the underlying sources of threats to America’s national security and reduced ability to leverage diplomatic opportunities.”

- “Critics (of US Middle East policy) claim that the US neither listens to nor understands what is being said about America in the Middle east region.” This is called “Voice of the Customer.”

- “In Iraq, the US fights an enemy it hardly knows. Its descriptions have relied on gross approximations and crude categories (Saddamists, Islamo-fascists and the like) that bear only passing resemblance to reality.”

- “Today, there is a realization that strong negative public opinion about the United States could affect how helpful countries will be in the war of terrorism. Moreover, negative sentiment might assist terrorist groups in recruiting new members.”

- “...the US government’s voice is sometimes missing from local and international media.” “Military, embassy and other US government personnel in the field face cross-cultural communication challenges everyday. It takes only one misplaced image, word or phrase to confuse or cause offense, and many more to repair the damage.” “At a time when terrorism is a worldwide threat, addressing anti-American sentiment abroad and engaging in the “war of

ideas” are necessary supplements to traditional security measures.”

- “Disparate missions and strategies among government agencies engaged in public diplomacy have resulted in inefficiencies in public diplomacy efforts.”

- “Coordination of public diplomacy activities is hampered by the lack of a national communication strategy.”

- Certainly the worsening state of partisan politics in the United States fuels this problem. Professor James Wilson, Pepperdine University, cites numbers such as 81% of Democrats but only 20% of Republicans thought the Iraq War was a mistake. 94% of Republicans approve of the president’s overall performance while only 18% of Democrats do. He cites similar deep divides over many other political and social issues: religion, abortion, schooling, firearms, and so on. His summary is right on the mark: *“Sharpened debate (caused by political polarization) is arguably helpful with respect to domestic issues, but not for the management of important foreign and military matters... A divided America encourages our enemies, disheartens our allies, and saps our resolve—potentially to fatal effect.”*

- The Congressional Research Service (CRS) cites 29 separate reports, studies, and documents published between 1999 and 2005 that examine the structure, goals, and methods of US public diplomacy. New articles appear monthly covering similar topics. The problems are well documented.

Simply put, much of the world does not believe the US message. Our actions do not support our words. Poor coordination between US agencies only exacerbates the problems. Worse, the American public doubts the message of the US Government. You must have support from your followers to influence others.

What is Public Diplomacy?

If we are to understand how marketing applies to the discipline and how we might use it with to military operations, we need to know what public diplomacy involves. State Department

believes the goal of public diplomacy is to increase understanding of American values, policies, and initiatives and to counter anti-American sentiment and misinformation about the United States around the world. A slightly different definition appears in a congressional study, defining public diplomacy as: the promotion of America’s interests, culture and policies by informing and influencing foreign populations.

Both of these definitions lack somewhat in substance. Where is the action? We want to do more than increase understanding, we want to affect behavior. As early as 1998 at least one military author, Air Force Lt Col Jim Riggins, argued for a more active approach to public diplomacy. He offered a definition of public diplomacy as a government’s attempt to shape foreign public opinion through overt, structured dissemination of truthful information in such a way so as to support one’s own national objectives, interests, and goals. This more encompassing definition appears to be reflected now in the DOD’s official definition: “Those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.” But times and conditions have changed and we, as a nation and a military, have more to do. We want peoples of the world to buy into and embrace the concept of democracy. We want them to believe democracy and freedom will give them greater stability and security.

Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy

Strategic Communication is a separate discipline which describes a variety of instruments used by governments to understand global attitudes and cultures, engages in a dialog of ideas between people and institutions, advise policy makers, diplomats, and military leaders on the public opinion

implications of policy choice, and influence attitudes and behavior through communication strategies. As such, it informs public diplomacy. If public diplomacy seeks to promote foreign policy objectives, it must understand global attitudes and cultures, thus giving policy makers means to communicate their ideas and concepts.

Clearly, there is a two way link between the activities. The ability of SC to influence attitudes and behavior is best accomplished through public diplomacy activities. With its emphasis on personal connections, the more people-oriented public diplomacy is often better for communicating our strategic message. These two intra-related activities can be improved and made more effective with a comprehensive marketing strategy.

Why apply corporate marketing to strategic communications and public diplomacy?

Marketing is *active*. It is meant to accurately portray your company, your mission, and products. If done well, marketing achieves several goals:

- Proclaims your values to the customers
- Standardizes your message
- Links products, actions, and words
- Creates desire; customers want your product and will line up to buy it
- Creates loyalty
- Demand will out-run supply

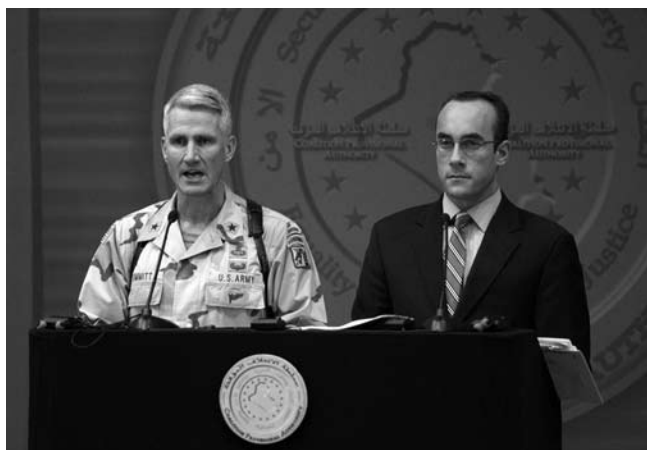
Marketing is also *proactive*. It builds demand where none exists. Campaigns are designed to build public understanding of who you are, what you are doing, why you are doing it, your future plans, and why the customer must have your product or service. You are making a promise to the customer.

DOD and the US Government can use this approach to build a global marketing campaign to create demand for democracy, freedom, security, and stability. We can build a demand through accurate and truthful message linked to

our actions and operations. By faithfully delivering on our promise we can earn repeat customers.

Not all commercial marketing campaigns are successful; the same factors that make those efforts fail will also break a US Government or DOD marketing campaign. Critical parts are:

- The linkage of the message to your actions
- The coordination of the message, actions, and operations between all governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and partners
- Truthfulness
- The internal stakeholder—the American public—must believe the message



*Defense and State teaming in action.
(Defense Link)*

A disconnect between our actions and our message has caused a loss of confidence. If we institute a marketing plan and one element of the government performs different actions than another, or we offer conflicting messages, then credibility is lost and believers lose faith. If the message is false or contains discrepancies then a shadow is cast upon us making our actions suspect. If the inside employees—DOD employees, federal workers, our contractors, the American people—are not sold completely on the message and product then we cannot hope to have world buy-in. If we are going to make a promise, we had better fulfill it, because the customer has options. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has a message and product he

is selling—and people are buying. Al Qaeda has a message and a product that people are buying. Some are even continue buying the Marxist/Leninist product. We need customers to prefer our message and product.

How the Marketing Approach Compares to Traditional DOD Endeavors

DOD has three functional areas that utilize tenants of a marketing campaign, but do not fill the same need. These are Public Affairs (PA), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and Information Operations (IO). Public Affairs manage public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward

both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense. They generally use a reactive method of communication designed to explain events after they occur, but not necessarily designed to influence behavior. They tend to focus on the media as its distribution channel, and are generally geared for the American audience, though with a sub-set audience of US allies. Public affairs do not necessarily direct their message toward neutral or hostile audiences.

PSYOP is a proactive event.

It is defined as planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately influence the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. Generally, PSYOP is used in tactical or operational level operations to sway the actions of enemy combatants and potential combatants and not directed to the general populace. Depending on the immediate need PSYOP may or may not be truthful. As a result, using PSYOP anywhere other than the tactical battlefield could hurt us more than help.

If the message is perceived as (or is) a lie, then we lose credibility. Even when it is the truth, it may not help our longer term objectives. For example, promising to drop a 10,000 pound bunker buster on an enemy formation in 24 hours unless they desert their unit may be true, but does not win friends.

Information Operations are those actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. This is primarily a technical field that protects information stored on communication networks. IO may also have an offensive component to attack an enemy's information systems. IO does not look to influence decisions or "buying habits."

A marketing campaign is not propaganda. The Department of Defense received bad media coverage in recent years for issues like the Secretary of Defense's Office of Strategic Influence and stories of the military paying to have positive articles written about operations and placed in Iraqi newspapers. Both of these events spun up reactive public affairs campaigns to counter the negative affects of the media coverage. A marketing campaign is completely open and acknowledged. It is not pushing doctrine, policy, or agendas. Rather, it is a straightforward attempt to build desire for a product and create a market for that product. In our case the products are a more esoteric than a loaf of bread. Nonetheless, they are products we want peoples of the world to taste and experience.

Corporate Methodology and Model

Marketing is the set of activities used to influence the thoughts and choice decisions of your target audience. A marketing plan is designed to capture the potential customer's attention, motivate them to want your product, move them to actually buy your product, convince them to buy again, and use their experience with your product or experience to influence other customers.

Figure 1 presents the Corporate Marketing Model to help envision development of a marketing plan and

how to apply that plan to operations. It is important to note that this is not a serial process, but an iterative one—refinement continues even after we launch a marketing campaign.

The Message

This is the brand theme, the essence of the message you wish to convey. This may be developed iteratively and in fact benefits from refinement as the marketing campaign develops. The rest of the messaging will be based on this theme. It should be short and snappy; you want immediate recall—something memorable. It may also include a logo.

For the US and its efforts to sell democracy, freedom, security, and stability, one idea for a simple, unifying message is: *Expect the rights of liberty*. This would become the theme around which we would build all other messages.

Further, the message must be integrated. DOD cannot create its own separate message—it must be the US message. Ideally this would flow down from the President with assistance and guidance from Department of State (DOS). They would be the owner of the message—perhaps our Central Marketing Office. DOS would then develop and refine the messaging for many different contexts and applications. Other Federal agencies such as DOD, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), etc, would develop their own messaging based on central themes developed and handed down from DOS. The US Government currently lacks a complete, comprehensive, and integrated communications strategy; we will be successful only when we get the message right.

Target Market Analysis and Opportunity Analysis

In this step you are working to identify your target market demographics.

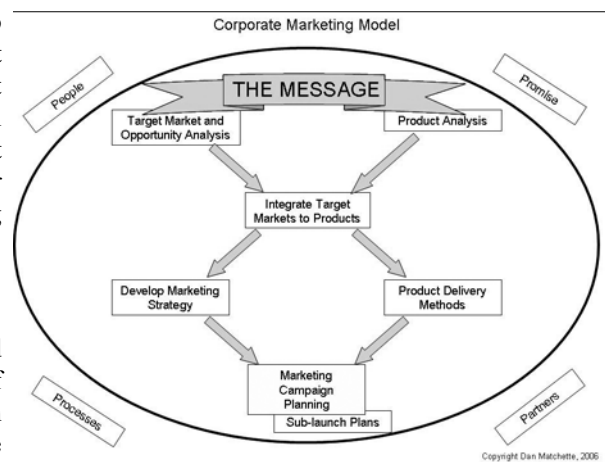


Figure 1. Corporate Marketing Model.

The idea is to segment customers, usually by behavior, with the idea to first target the people whose behavior is already amenable to your product—those people who already want it. Then, after we establish a base, we begin to work on converting other buyers. There will always be people who do not want the product and no amount of marketing will persuade them to buy. It is important to identify this group than spending any amount of money trying to sell to them. Geoffrey Moore defines five general groups of people that help categorize target customers:

- The Enthusiast: already on your side and wants your next release
- The Visionary: sees the value of your product and with little prompting will use it
- The Pragmatist: approaches with some caution, wants to see if someone else uses it first
- The Conservative: could live without your product and will only use it when it is clear there is no other real choice
- The Skeptic: will never voluntarily use your product

After identifying people in these groups, target them in this order with unified messaging. Other demographics typically used to further segment customers include age, location, income, job, education, buying habits, methods used to gather information, and entertainment preferences. No money is spent on people and groups who will never be sympathetic to your product

or service. The next step is to identify the markets where your product can be used. Where are the people you want to target?

With an idea of who the target customers and their markets, you must define their values. What is important to them? What drives them? What makes them select one product over another? Do not take your best guess about what they value, you must ask them. This is known as “Voice of Customer.” The only way you can be sure your product satisfies the customer’s needs is to ask. There are many ways to do this such as interviews, surveys, polls, customer feedback, and performance monitoring, i.e. buying habits. Companies are now spending considerable resources performing in-depth research of customers and markets. Market intelligence is a component of this research, and follows the same pattern as military intelligence and analysis. In fact, there are now companies that specialize in performing detailed market research, selling this as a service to other companies.

Finally, with a completed analysis, rank order the target customers and markets by revenue. In instances where revenue is not the driving factor, you can rank order by the payoff or expected impact, such as how much one customer will influence others.

While this technique clearly works in corporate America, how would this method apply this to DOD? Clearly, a broad, world-wide messaging campaign would be needed. A global message is beyond the scope of this article, however we can look briefly at two regional markets: the United States and the Middle East. The US audience probably

does not need a targeted message, so we will use a broad, horizontal campaign. A horizontal campaign generally restates your theme with more detail, but does not go into specific details about how a particular product will help a particular customer.

The Middle East group needs more analysis. How should they be segmented within the region? There are many ways to do this: tribe, clan, religion, age. Defense Science Board reports suggest there are two broad groups, those more inclined to support the US and those less inclined. The Supporters can be divided into the Regime Elites, the Establishment Ulama (middle class), and the Technocratic Class (professionals). The Non-Supporters are divided into the Regimes, the Uncommitted (who prefer status-quo), the Sympathizers (to the Jihadis), the Islamists (indirect supporters of the Jihadis), and the Jihadis (radical change makers for a Salafist society). However, on one point I take issue with the Defense Science Board. By referring to the last group as *Jihadis* we may inadvertently give them legitimacy. Jihad is a holy war and Jihadis are holy warriors. In marketing words are important, so we must get our words right. Rather, let us refer to the last group as *Mufsidoon*—evildoers who are engaged in *Hirabah*—unholy war. In a small way this will help us undermine the insurgents’ legitimacy.

Recognizing not everyone fits into those categories, former comptroller of the Secretary of Defense Dov Zakheim argues most democratic change movements in the Middle East have come from the Regimes and Regime Elites. We should therefore start with

four groups: the Regime Elites, the Regime Leaders, the Establishment Ulama, and the Technocratic Class. These should be further segmented, targeting specifically Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, Morocco, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Using Moore’s definition above, most of our targets fall into the category of Pragmatists or Conservatives. There are few Enthusiasts or Visionaries to readily “buy” our products in the Middle East. Do not segment the customers by religion, but keep religion in mind, for it may affect the tailored message. As for the other groups—ignore them in terms of marketing. Neither our words nor actions will sway them. But we will keep their message in mind, for we need to counter their message to our target customers.

What do these customers want? What is the voice of the customer in the Middle East? And what is the competitor’s message you may have to counter? No doubt these are complex questions, but there are some basic answers. Figure 1 provides some details.

Customer’s Requirements Competing Message

Our competition’s message is becoming more standardized and credible; it is beginning to ring true with their customers. Our messaging must therefore de-stress the competitor’s message by better arguing the benefits of our product. Our message must emphasize democracy tailored to their unique Islamic heritage and desires (see Zakheim), honor through freedom, and economic improvements derived from stability and security of a well-governed society. We must place our emphasis on the benefits of our product and not on attacking the competitor’s product (i.e. Islam or Islamic law)—though it will be necessary to undermine the competitor’s credibility. The International Crisis Group suggests our adversaries’ actions be cast as dishonorable and Anti-Islamic, and that they perform monetarily motivated, criminally reprehensible acts (i.e. beheading captives). This is why it is useful to refer to them as *Mufsidoon*.

Customer’s Requirements	Competing Message
Honor and Islamic morality must be preserved	Defeat the occupier whose invasion is simply a continuation of the crusade to dominate Islam
Economic improvement and ability to earn a decent living	Remain pure from the corrupting influences of the world
Secular government if there is cleric oversight (juridical validation)	Sharia rule; longer term to re-establish the Islamic Caliphate. (While the Caliphate may be a romantic ideal, it is also unifying vision.) Democracy is a threat to Islamic values.
Security	Highlighting coalition missteps and resulting turmoil

Figure 1. What do customers want?

Product Analysis

With the customer now somewhat defined, it is time to analyze our products. Typical analysis criteria are:

- **Product Description**, in one clear sentence why your product is perfect for a specific buyer and what it does best

- **Product Differentiation**, why your product stands out in a credible and relevant way to the customers you are targeting

- **Product Name**, it is more important to be descriptive than creative

- **Functionality, Features and Benefits**, to understand the product from a customer's point of view, list the functionality, the features, and the benefits that product has; prioritize each for the target market

- **Product Adaptability**, to understand how adaptable your product is to your markets

- **Price**, the amount of money charged for a product or service or the value exchanged for the benefits of the product or service. A price too low will not be taken seriously, too high and the potential customer will not take the risk. Price is not always monetary.

How would an analysis look for our customer sets? A horizontal campaign for US customers will primarily sell the benefits of democracy. Remember, we want the greater US populace to believe democracy, freedom, security, and stability are not only good for us,



*US spokesman addresses Middle Eastern customers.
(Defense Link)*

but good for others. And for our Middle East customers, Figure 2 shows what an analysis might look like.

Integrate Target to Product

With the customer by and large defined and the products understood with regard to the target customer, it is time to match the rank ordered customer with the products that fit their needs. Another integration concern is product positioning—how the target market defines you in relation to your competitors. If the target market views your product as unique, you are in a good position. Being one-of-a-kind means customers have a compelling reason to buy your product. Positioning also considers two aspects of the environment: the external marketing environment and the internal competitive advantage. What challenges does the DOD face in its markets? What unique advantage does the DOD have in advancing their product?

How are customers integrated to products in order to focus the marketing efforts? For the US horizontal marketing campaign the goal is to unify as much as possible the American populace behind the benefits of spreading democracy. Therefore the horizontal message will stress the benefits of democracy, the role that political systems play in providing stability and security. How might it look for the Middle East target customers? Figure 3 provides suggestions.

Frankly, positioning will be a challenge. Given the widespread dislike of the United States and its policies, it will be difficult to convince even the (hopefully) open-minded target Middle East customer we have defined. The external market environment ranges from ambivalent to outright hostile. Our internal competitive advantage is fractured and strident. However, we have one powerful advantage over our competitors who argue for other forms of governance: advantage *is* the product.

Having some voice and representation before your leaders is desirable. Many hope for a stable, secure life for themselves and their children. For this market however, words and noble ideas are insufficient; actions must demonstrate the concepts. To create a yearning for freedom we need functioning democratic institutions to characterize the principles. Representation must be fair and equitable, applying civil liberties to all. Representative bodies must function with a degree of efficiency

Product Characteristic	Democracy	Freedom	Security	Stability
Description	To be represented by and to represent yourself to your rulers and be fairly judged by them	To make an honorable earning and a decent living for you and your family and to pray to the God of your choice	To work, worship, and live without fear. To have a reliable infrastructure for your homes, towns, and schools	To enjoy the benefits for your lifetime and your children's lifetime and their children's lifetime.
Differentiation	Your voice counts	You keep all that is good and holy	All are welcome, none need fear	It will last beyond your time as a legacy
Functionality, Features, Benefits	Representation, Fairness	Openness, Education	Degrees of Freedom, Schools	Prosperity, Capital markets
Adaptability	Highly tailorable to your needs and yet maintains your Islamic identity	You may grow it as much as you are comfortable with	Improves every environment	Once stable you will never want chaos again
Price	Courage, Time; steadfastness; Giving up historical hatred & tribal feuds			

Figure 2. Product analysis.

Customer	Product
Regime Leaders	Democracy, Stability
Regime Elites	Democracy, Stability
Establishment Ulama	Representation, Security, Freedom
Technocratic Class	Freedom, Opportunity

Figure 3. Customer versus product.

to accomplish the tasks of governance. We can build the desire for the product with our words, but only by following through with meaningful, functional mechanisms.

These desires among peoples of the world, if they can be built and sustained, are our position and our relative competitive advantage. It is also our differentiated brand promise for the customers. However, it will most likely help our cause of distancing the product from the United States Government—lest we taint the product.

With the customer environment and product differentiation now fairly well defined, we turn our attention to various marketing methods we will use to create brand awareness, and ultimately sales.

Develop Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is primarily focused on the various components included in the message and a plan to get the message out. The usual objective is to move your target customer through the following phases: Unawareness > Awareness > Beliefs/Knowledge > Attitude > Purchase Intention > Purchase. To clarify, unawareness does not necessarily mean a lack of product knowledge, it can also mean the customer is unaware of your company, why your product is preferred over another, or unaware of why your company is preferred over another.

What components go into the message? Usually these are the promotion, the offer, the call for action, and the promise. The promotion is the specific mix of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations campaign used to pursue advertising and marketing objectives. The offer is a statement to the customer

that tells the customer what is being offered: the value proposition, the problem the product of service solves, how the problem is solved, and product features. The call for action must challenge the target to do something based on the offer. Ask customers to take an action so they will learn more, test your product, or even buy the product. Challenge them to act and tell them what action you want them to perform. However, the promise is more than simply telling the customer about the benefits of your product; it is your guarantee of satisfaction. It is your personal vow the product will meet, even exceed, the customer's expectation. It is linked to your credibility, perhaps even your honor.

When crafting the message it is important we analyze the culture where that message will be delivered. Cultural knowledge is important to ensure we use the right words, meanings, inflections, and the right delivery method.

Metrics must then measure the message's success. These are especially important for measuring the response to the message as different offers are tested, and for tracking the results of the offer. Metrics take two forms: leading indicators; and lagging indicators. Leading indicators are those factors we can control before making an offer, including employee satisfaction, company performance indices, product differentiation, process efficiency, customer satisfaction, and

customer advocacy. Lagging indicators are those showing results for actions that have already occurred. These include things such as revenue growth, market share, profitability, referrals, repeat purchases, sales, brand awareness, and return on investment. Figure 4 shows all these elements included in a simple Web advertisement for a Samsung™ LCD monitor.

What resources are available to get out the message? There are many methods, from classic advertising to using the latest Internet media techniques. The challenge is to select those most appropriate to your customer and those that the customer will encounter. A partial list includes:

- World Wide Web: advertising, Web media, blogs, pop-ups, e-mail, chat, pod-casting, and webinars (Web-based seminars)
- Direct Mail
- Classified Advertisements
- Press Releases
- Product Reviews, both in-house and second party
- Print media
- Broadcasting (radio, TV)
- White papers
- Event (trade show, conference, lunche, party)
- Collateral advertising
- Public relations
- Lobbying
- Direct calls
- Conference calls

Figure 4. Example Web ad analysis.

These are not all one-way communication tools. Two-way dialog is vital to companies and is used frequently. Interactive webinars, conferencing, public relations, and lobbying are critical techniques to inform customers and receive feedback.

For our two previously defined customer sets—the American public and the four Middle East targets—there should be different promotion strategies that offer tailored message variations. Before considering what these might look like, we need to consider other resources available to the US Government and DOD for distributing the message that are not available to commercial firms. For the military these resources include:

- Recruiting
- Public interaction
- Troops on the ground who engage in face-to-face contact

Department of State has used a variety of methods, which include:

- American Corners
- Virtual Presence Centers
- Information Presence Centers
- American Presence Posts
- American Libraries
- Broadcasting, i.e. Voice of America, Radio Sawa, and Al Hurra television

The DOD can use all the resources available to commercial companies, as well as tailor them for our use. Collateral advertising, in particular, provides a unique opportunity. DOD can partner with other agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), other governments, and private businesses to do joint advertising. For example, establish a partnership with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) [Doctors Without Borders] where DOD will actively advertise MSF as the humanitarian medical organization of choice—and they will actively promote democracy as a means of establishing stability, thus leading to better medical conditions.

One last thought about the message really gets to the heart of influencing

behavior: we want to establish an emotional connection with the customer. This happens when a customer uses a product because it fulfills a deeper desire than just a need. This is a challenging goal that quickly delves into behavioral psychology and is highly dependant on culture. However, once a customer is emotionally attached to a product it is virtually certain they will use it for life.

The first goal is to move the target customers from unawareness to awareness and then beyond. For the American target customer the goal is to make them aware of the benefits of the product—simply that democracy is good, not only for us but for others, and that for greater worldwide stability the US Government wants democracy in as many places as possible. For the Middle

partnerships. Direct distribution is when a company offers its products directly to the customer. This could be via on-line ordering, mail-order, or company store. Apple Computer™, for example, runs a number of stores to sell its products directly to the consumer. Starbucks™ coffee shops are direct distribution channels. Retail is the distribution of product through other companies whose mission is to sell a variety of products. Gillette™, for example, sells its razors through retailers, such as Wal-Mart and K-Mart. Partnerships are agreements between companies to sell the others products in part or in whole. Symbol Technologies may sell equipment directly to the customer, but prefers to sell through partners such as Dexterra and Adesso. As a means of incentivizing the partnership, Symbol Technologies offers better prices to customers who buy from partners.

But delivery of the product is not sufficient. The company's other elements must be aligned one to the other, and to distribution. Such elements include Sales, Human Resources (HR), Market Intelligence, Operations, Supply Chain, Information Technology (IT), Finance, and others. It is reasonable to say there is a many-to-many linkage between

these elements; each one must be in perfect alignment. Marketing may generate demand, but HR needs to staff a sales force for the customer interface. Demand must drive the supply chain to ensure product is available. Finance must provide funding for all operations and HR. Market Intelligence informs marketing and operations about expected market conditions and the competition. Operations integrates the actions. Supply Chain gathers new material and provides product to the distribution channel. Figure 6 represents the alignment notion. It is bad business for a company to successfully market a product and then fail to deliver that product. For example, Sony Corporation built a great deal of interest for its Play



*DOD “advertiser” drops in on a commercial venue.
(Defense Link)*

East targets, the goal is to also drive the benefits of democracy, but in this case de-coupled from the provider. We do *not* want poor perception of the US to distract from the good that can come from representative governance. Figure 5 provides some marketing strategy.

With our marketing strategy developed, we must then consider actual product delivery. Alignment between the product's message and the product's delivery is crucial.

Product Delivery Method

Product delivery includes the method or distribution channels used to make the product or service available to the consumer. There are three general types of distribution channels: direct, retail, and

Marketing Element	US Customer	Mid East Customer
Promotion	Primarily advertising	Advertising - Indirect Sales - Public Relations
Offer	Expect the rights of liberty - Your children's future depends on world stability	- Expect the rights of liberty - To be fairly represented by and to represent yourself to your rulers - To make an honorable earning and make a decent living - To live without fear - Opportunity
Call to Action	Become more informed - Become more active in American democratic processes	- Get more information to make informed decisions - Establish local democratic organizations - Call on your tribal leaders to demand representative government
Culture	Beer drinking, NASCAR watching, red-state right wingers - Wine sipping, Volvo driving, blue-state left wingers - TV-watching, worried about the job and rising medical costs, just-want-to-get-on-with-life mid-packers	- Heavy focus on tradition - Tribal orientation and attendant authority and social status - Time as a non-linear concept - Long memory that does not encourage forgiveness - Face-to-Face communication and two-way relationships preferred and trusted - Important values: family, religious faith (and freedom to practice as you choose), social safety net, volunteerism, freedom of expression, universal reach of education, and economic prosperity - Rule of law - Personal and family honor
Metrics	Leading - Economic measures that affect quality of life (i.e. mortgage rates, costs of goods, medical costs, gas prices, tax rates, job rates, education rates, inflation) Lagging - Unit cohesion at DOD and Joint levels - Partisan political strife/division	Leading - Marketing budget Global economic performance - Attitude towards democracy as an institution - US Intra-agency coordination - Percentage of customers who prefer democracy to other forms of government Lagging - Relative economic improvement - Attitude towards the U.S. Government - Attitude towards Americans - Number of message "hits" - Increase in democratic institutions - Sectarian strife
Marketing Resources	Television advertising - Recruiting messaging - Web based media, pop-ups, blogs, pod-casts, targeted emails - Coordinated intra-agency messaging (i.e. democratic messaging at national parks) - Event based presence (i.e. at annual Hollywood Oscar presentations)	Continued traditional Department of State activities - Advertising in local print media - Advertising on local broadcast sources, especially Al Jazeera - White papers on the benefits of democracy, freedom, stability, and security - In depth face-to-face encounters and private debate at the diplomatic level down to the individual level - Partner-based messaging with NGOs and private business - Heavy Web-based presence using all means

Figure 5. Marketing Strategy.

Station Three, but failed to get it to the market; in the meantime they lost huge amounts of market share to Microsoft who successfully delivered its X-Box 360 to the market in time for Christmas 2005. It is a complex challenge to link all the elements of a company, but it must be done. The marketers's challenge is to link the message to the rest of the operations; to build the demand just in time to deliver the product.

How could this be applied to US Government and DOD strategic communications and public diplomacy activities? It means that if we are going to sell democracy, we had better be prepared to deliver—and have the mechanism to deliver. It also means the entire operation must be fully financed, all positions fully staffed, that competition is clearly understood, and the partnerships for delivery of democracy are solidly in place.

Regarding finance, how much should be spent on marketing efforts? An industry rule of thumb suggests that 3.5% of revenue is required to maintain a

market, and 5% of revenue is required to penetrate a new market. Clearly market penetration is what we are after. The Fiscal Year 2007 US Presidential budget request is \$13 trillion, which means \$650 billion should be dedicated across the federal government to the marketing effort. DOD's budget request is \$504 billion, which means \$25 billion for dedicated marketing—the big numbers necessary for a winning investment.

Military operations are one type of product delivery channel used in the DOD. The US Military participates in numerous operations using a wide variety of operational types. The list of operations consists of the following:

- Offensive Operations (which now include Defeat Terrorist Networks)
- Defensive Operations (which now include Defend the Homeland in Depth)
- Stability Operations (which include Shaping Choices for Countries at Strategic Crossroads, Preventing Hostile States and Non-State Actors from Acquiring or using Weapons of Mass

Destruction (WMD), Peace Operations

- Support Operations (which include Domestic Support Operations, Nation Assistance/Building, Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, Relief Operations, Disaster Relief)

Many of these operations are ideally suited for a marketing campaign. For the internal campaign directed towards the US public, we need an aggressive marketing campaign integrated into operations associated with Defending the Homeland, Humanitarian and Civic Assistance, Domestic Support Operations, Relief Operations, Disaster Relief, Support to Civil Law Enforcement, and Community Assistance.

Likewise, for the Middle East marketing campaign, maximizing the integration of the message into Shaping Choices for Countries at Strategic Crossroads, Peace Operations, Security Assistance, Humanitarian and Civic Assistance, Nation Assistance/Building, Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, Relief Operations, and Disaster Relief is necessary.

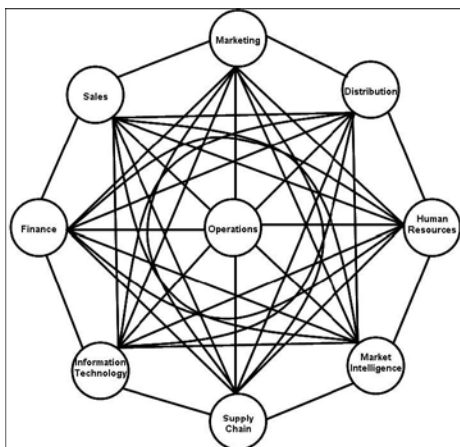


Figure 6. Alignment notation.

Linking the message with operations provides the greatest opportunity to “say and do” the same thing—to keep the message linked to our actions. Finally, all the analysis and planning should be linked together into the campaign plan.

Marketing Campaign Planning and Sub-Launch Planning

The campaign plan is delivering the tailored message to the target customer using the chosen methods over a period of time, with the goal of generating demand and ultimately selling product.

In corporate America, marketing campaigns typically span an 18 month time frame. This is the amount of time needed to build visibility and create demand. It assumes a “buying” environment, one where the buyer is friendly to the company offering the product. In 18 months, the Apple Corporation could generate much demand and revenue on its next release of the iPod. Alternately, W.R. Grace and Company would need much longer to convince the public to buy asbestos based ceiling tiles. In fact, the market would be so hostile to such a product that no marketing campaign could ever be successful at selling asbestos.

What is a reasonable estimate of time needed to change a market’s perception of a company or a product in a hostile environment? CEO of Johnson & Johnson Bill Weldon stated anecdotally that it has taken five years worth of effort to turn public opinion about pharmaceutical manufacturers,

and that several more years of work is needed. The direct implication is that in the current hostile environment, it will take years of messaging and action to begin changing global attitudes.

As discussed earlier, there are two types of marketing campaigns: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal campaigns are broad and designed to generate general recognition of a product. Vertical campaigns are directed towards very specific markets. While everyone is likely to see a horizontal campaign, a vertical campaign is only for targeted at customers. In 2005, IBM ran a broad horizontal campaign for their professional services that featured a help desk worker sitting at a desk in a number of unlikely settings. One such spot showed the worker solving traffic congestion on a freeway for a police officer. Millions of Americans saw these advertisements, which created broad recognition for IBM’s technical services. At the same time, IBM was advertising its Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) software in RFID Journal, specifically targeting retail companies to help solve their backend warehousing problems. There is a very good chance most Americans did not see this vertical advertising campaign.

What might a DOD campaign plan look like? It could take any number of forms, but figures 7 through 10 offer one example tailored to the Establishment Ulama customer target.

While recognizing this plan is incomplete, it offers the scope of planning required to reach just one market segment. Businesses expend much effort to put together comprehensive plans in an attempt to persuade customers to buy. Businesses have it easier than DOD because they usually have a limited set

of products and a limited customer set to reach. And, most of the world isn’t hostile toward them.

The challenge for the Federal government and the Department of Defense is much larger. For this reason we must have partners who will help sell our message, we must have an appropriate budget, and we must integrate messaging and advertising into all operations. It is a challenge we must successfully take on, if we truly desire to spread democracy—and the resulting security and stability.

The Surrounders

The Surrounders are the four points around the exterior of the marketing model. All these points have been covered above, but they are so critical to overall success, they must be at the forefront of thinking and planning.

- People: “It is becoming understood that brands that earn their customers’s



Figure 7. DOD Campaign Plan (1).

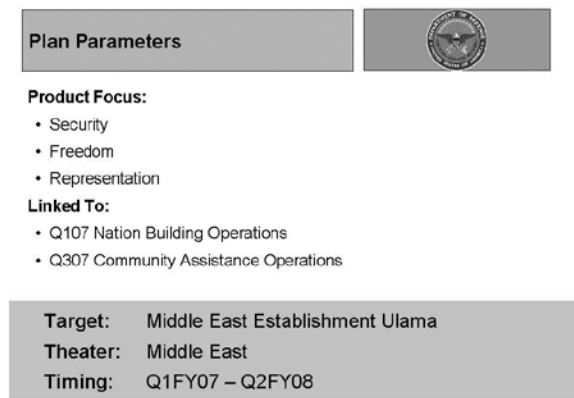


Figure 8. DOD Campaign Plan (2).



Figure 9. DOD Campaign Plan (3).

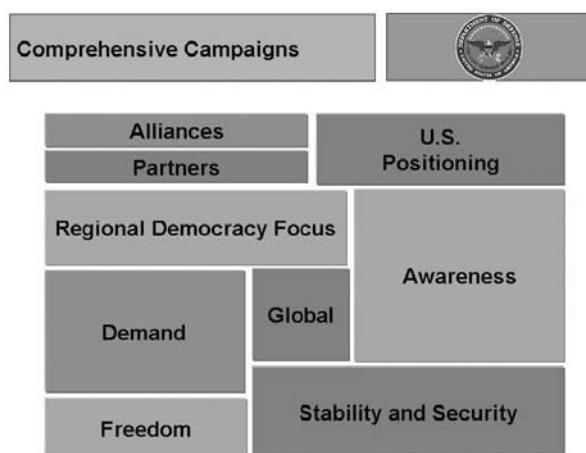


Figure 10. DOD Campaign Plan (4).

loyalty are characterized by employees who understand and identify with the brand.” If the insiders do not believe then they will not sell the product or service. DOD employees, military and civilian, must believe the message. Likewise so must employees of Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Justice, and all the Federal agencies. They hurt the mission if they don’t support the message. The American public is also considered an insider, which is why we must expand marketing dollars to win them over.

- Processes: our internal processes must be aligned. The marketing strategy aligns to product, aligns to sales, aligns to distribution, aligns to supply, chain aligns to operations... and on it goes. As one successful CEO noted, “Processes must be common across the company. Anytime a process is “tailored” or shortcuts are taken is generally when

they have problems. Follow the process and projects work well. Process is very important; always looking to improve process, consistency, and speed.”

- Promise: our promise is linked to our idea of honor. The Middle East customers will understand this concept, but if we fail to deliver, we lose face and honor. What could be a better promise than to stake honor on the satisfaction your product will deliver?

- Partners: we can not go this “long war” by ourselves, we need other organizations that will support and help co-deliver the message. These partners should be tightly bound to our processes and our promise. These partners include:

• Other agencies, starting with Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Justice

- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Private business, particularly those that work abroad
- Other governments

Call to Action

Marketing is effective—and with a serious investment—offers serious returns. What then should we do? Declare that America is “right” and go it alone? Become even more so the world’s police force, setting up armed camps in every disruptive state? Or launch a campaign aligned with our people, processes, partners, and operations to build US public support and confidence? Then slowly begin to build world-wide demand for greater security, stability, and democratic institutions? I believe the latter is the preferred choice.

There are several concrete steps to start this process:

• The US Government develops a national communications strategy to start linking intra-agency processes with Department of State taking the lead

• The President and Congress increase funding for marketing to 5% of budget across the federal budget

• DOD applies 5% of its budget to marketing

• Create within the Department of State a Central Marketing Office that creates the US marketing strategy and unified messaging, and which coordinates the marketing efforts of subordinate agencies such as the Department of Defense

• DOS, DOD, and other federal agencies hire an international marketing company to bring professional expertise to the marketing problem

• DOS, DOD, and other federal agencies hire a news wire service to distribute US messaging

• DOD plans operations as part of our marketing campaign

• DOD plans marketing campaigns as part of our operations

• DOD incorporates marketing into our training

• DOS, DOD, and other Federal agencies partner with business for more than just messaging. The government and DOD could encourage and incentivize US and foreign companies to build and operate in the Middle East, and other areas around the world. These companies would use local employees, verses imported foreign employees. The company would support both local markets and the broader global market. Local employees would become invested in jobs, and their success will help build the local infrastructure, grow markets, and build stability and security. The incentives for the companies must give them a legitimate business rationale to be in the country; we can not subsidize their operations. Subsidizing provides no incentive to perform, and worse, makes them American lackeys.

Conclusion

Does a marketing plan solve all our problems? No, only half our problems—the other half are solved by our actions.

Words build the expectation and the deeds deliver the goods. The challenge is that despite any number of words, one misstep with our actions will end any credibility we may have created. The US already has major credibility problems in areas of the world where we desire influence. It is time to start stepping carefully.

In the business world, all employees are involved in marketing—part of their job is to sell the company. Likewise, everyone in the military has some responsibility for strategic communication and diplomacy—part of our job is to sell the US. A corporate marketing approach to our military diplomacy, strategic communications, public diplomacy, and military operations along with new ways of thinking about our problems, will bring results. We must plan for and look towards the long term. We need to orient our people, align our processes, gather our partners, and deliver on our promises. Our own democracy, freedom, stability, and security require us to do so.

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